CHAPTER X

I REMEMBER vividly the feelings which almost oppressed me as I first sat down in my chair in the Senate chamber. Now I had actually reached the most exalted public position to which iny boldest dreams of ambition had hardly dared to aspire. I was still a young man, just forty. Little more than sixteen years had elapsed since I had landed on these shores, a homeless waif saved from the wreck of a revolutionary movement in Europe. Then I was enfolded in the generous hospitality of the American people opening to me, as freely as to its own children, the great opportunities of the new world. And here I was now, a member of the highest law-making body of the greatest of republics. Should I ever be able fully to pay my debt of gratitude to this country, and to justify the honors that had been heaped upon me? To accomplish this, my conception of duty could not be pitched too high. I recorded a vow in my own heart that I would at least honestly endeavor to fulfill that duty; that I would conscientiously adhere to the principle *solus populi suprema lex;* that I would never be a sycophant of power nor a flatterer of the multitude; that, if need be, I would stand up alone for my conviction, of truth and right; and that there would be no personal sacrifice too great for my devotion to the Republic.

My first official duty was to witness, with the Senate, the inauguration of General Grant as President of the United

States. I stood near the same spot from which, eight years before, I had witnessed the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, renmrksble contrast,^—theB the anxious patriot, in the houi